

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 14, 15, 23, 24 and 29-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been amended to address the specific objections raised by the Examiner, such that it is believed that the rejections are overcome. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 15, 21-28, 30-38 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gardner, et al. (U.S. Patent number 5,882,973) in view of Nguyen (U.S. Patent number 6,472,261). Claims 14, 29 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gardner, et al. and Nguyen, and further in view of Huang (U.S. Patent number 5,899,722). In view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks, the rejections are respectfully traversed, and reconsideration of the rejections is requested.

The claims are amended to specify particular features of the applicants' claimed second conductive layer. Referring to, for example, Figures 1 through 5 of the present application, the applicants' claimed second conductive layer 16, 34, 56, 76, 96 is a single uninterrupted layer that is formed over the conductive patterns 4 and 6, 24 and 26, 44 and 46, 64 and 66, 84 and 86. The single uninterrupted second conductive layer includes a contact portion which extends down into the structure to the substrate 2, 22, 42, 62, 82. This feature of the applicants' invention, now set forth in the amended claims, is neither taught nor suggested by any of the cited references, taken alone or in combination.

Gardner, et al. is cited as showing the applicants' claimed second conductive layer, identified by reference numeral 48 in Gardner, et al. However, the layer 48 in Gardner, et al. is not a single uninterrupted layer which is formed over conductive patterns and which has a contact portion extending down to the conductive patterns, where a first insulation layer has a planar top surface extending between the conductive patterns and the contact portion of the second conductive layer, as now claimed by the applicants.

Nguyen also fails to teach a single uninterrupted second conductive layer which is formed over conductive patterns and which has a contact portion extending down to the conductive patterns, where a first insulation layer has a planar top surface extending between the conductive patterns and the contact portion of the second conductive layer. Accordingly, there is no combination of Gardner, et al. and Nguyen which would result in providing such teaching or suggestion.

Since Gardner, et al. and Nguyen, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the invention set forth in the amended claims, it is believed that the claims are allowable over Gardner, et al. and Nguyen. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-7, 15, 21-28, 30-38 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gardner, et al. in view of Nguyen is respectfully requested.

Huang also fails to teach a single uninterrupted second conductive layer which is formed over conductive patterns and which has a contact portion extending down to the conductive patterns, where a first insulation layer has a planar top surface extending between the conductive patterns and the contact portion of the second conductive layer. Accordingly, there is no

combination of Gardner, et al., Nguyen and Huang which would result in providing such teaching or suggestion.

Since Gardner, et al., Nguyen and Huang, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the invention set forth in the amended claims, it is believed that the claims are allowable over Gardner, et al., Nguyen and Huang. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejection of claims 14, 29 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gardner, et al., Nguyen and Huang is respectfully requested.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully solicited. If a telephone conference will expedite prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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